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ABSTRACT

Intended for elementary school reading teachers, this booklet offers insight into the nature of comprehension and suggestions for enhancing children's comprehension skills. The first chapter discusses trends in comprehension research, and several specific points about the nature of comprehension and how it can best be taught. The second chapter contains clusters of comprehension skills and suggestions for instruction as follows: (1) interpreting the rules of written English; (2) enlarging meaning vocabulary; (3) reading for main ideas and details; (4) drawing conclusions, predicting outcomes, implying character traits and feelings, drawing generalizations, and drawing conclusions; (5) understanding relations; (6) interpreting figurative and special language; (7) recognizing literary types and devices; and (8) interpreting critically. The third chapter contains a rating scale for teaching responsibilities in comprehension instruction. (HTH)

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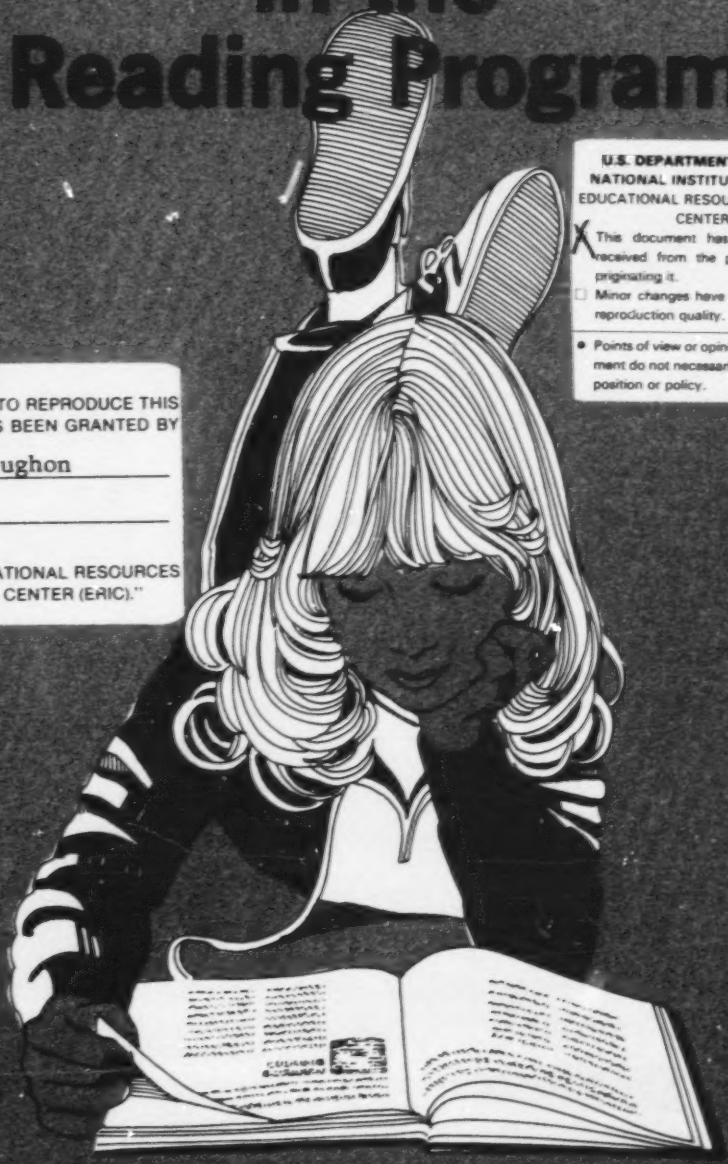

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Comprehension in the Reading Program

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Chapter 1
Comprehension in Reading

Comprehension is necessary for reading to occur. Therefore, a major goal of reading instruction is to teach students to comprehend what they read. This goal is vitally important throughout the elementary and secondary grades and on into college.

Although almost no one challenges the idea that comprehension is the heart of reading, attention to comprehension in reading is less than a century old. Almost 70 years ago Edward L. Thorndike (1917) published a research study that helped to turn attention to comprehension. By today's standards his research would be considered unsophisticated. It came at a time when an oral calling of words was being emphasized. Thorndike found that intermediate grade students failed miserably in comprehending a paragraph that the researcher presented to them. Certain words appeared highly potent, as Thorndike put it, in students' misinterpretations of the paragraph. One possibility **not** offered by Thorndike was that the students had problems in recognizing words and therefore could not comprehend. The unsatisfactory answers given by some of Thorndike's subjects probably resulted from their limited word recognition abilities.

Almost seven decades after Thorndike's study, researchers still are trying to explain this process of interpreting written material. In recent years the National Institute of Education has funded a Center for the Study of Reading at the University of Illinois. Thus far, many small, often related, studies have been published. The Center research, like that of much of the recent research on comprehension, reflects the influence of cognitive psychologists. Old terms are being replaced by new ones, sometimes with refined meanings and sometimes with no change in meaning. Studies from the Center in some instances offer research support for existing practices. In other instances they question some prevalent practices. For the most part, however, suggestions for classroom applications of the findings of the Center are yet to be published.

In addition to or along with the many small research studies, many theories have been offered. Despite the lack of solid research evidence, approaches that are effective in helping learners to understand what they read are available.

Throughout the nation a better job appears to have been done in teaching word recognition skills than in teaching comprehension skills (Farr, 1977). The difference in primary and higher grade level achievement gains over time support this conclusion. From year to year in recent comparisons of test data, primary scores tend to continue to

rise, whereas at intermediate and higher levels scores have leveled off or dropped slightly. A likely contributor to the differences is that tests for primary students assess word recognition skills directly whereas word recognition skills are subsumed under comprehension at higher levels.

Further evidence that younger children are continuing to show greater gains than older students over time comes from periodic national assessments. The reading skills of students across the nation were studied as a part of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (1981) at three periods of time — 1970-1971, 1974-1975 and 1979-1980 school years. The sample included nine-, 13- and 17-year-old students. The nine year olds made significant gains both in 1974-1975 and in 1979-1980 in reference skills, literal comprehension and inferential comprehension. The largest gains for the nine year olds were noted among black students, students in the Southeast, students in rural areas and students from disadvantaged-urban community schools. Over the 10-year period 13 year olds improved in literal comprehension whereas the 17 year olds' performance in inferential comprehension declined.

Readers at all levels tend to comprehend literally better than they do inferentially (Farr, 1977). The NAEP results cited above support this conclusion. An interesting related factor is that standardized, norm-referenced tests of comprehension at intermediate and higher levels tend to assess inference to a much greater extent than they do literal comprehension. In a study of the eight most widely used standardized, norm-referenced tests of comprehension, Aaron and Flynt (1981, 1982) found that at least 67 percent of the items in 28 of 35 tests analyzed were assessing inferential comprehension. The five levels of one of these tests contained from 86 to 96 percent inference items. Obviously, then, standardized, norm-referenced tests do not assess equally inferential and literal comprehension. Further, Aaron and Flynt found great differences in the extent to which the various skills are assessed.

Before presenting clusters of comprehension skills, some general comments on teaching comprehension skills are given. These points should be kept in mind as comprehension skills are being taught.

Some General Comments about Comprehension

Students who have difficulty in identifying words will have difficulty in comprehending. Though the end result sought is comprehension, being able to identify words is a necessary means to that end. Try this selection in which words have been x-ed out to simulate word identification difficulties.

One day when XXXXXXX XXXXXX was XXXXXXX among the leaves, an XXXXX fell out of a tree and XXXXXX her on the tail.
"Oh," said XXXXXXX XXXXXX, "The sky is XXXXXXX! I am XXXXXXX to XXXX the King."

If you were a seven or eight year old, you wouldn't really care what happened to the sky or Chicken Licken, if you had word attack problems as severe as this. Comprehension instruction needs to occur in materials that match the children's reading levels.

Children entering first grade are more alike than they ever will be again. Even so, the typical first grade class will contain children who range in ability levels from that typical of four year olds to that typical of eight year olds, with most being somewhere around normal expectancy. Reading levels in typical fourth grade classes will range from second to sixth grade levels, and by sixth grade that range will have grown to eight years or eight grades. It remains at least that wide into secondary school.

No teacher has ever taught a typical class, though he or she will have a wide range of reading achievement in his or her classroom. In some classes the reading achievement is not at all typical. A class may contain students who, for the most part, read at levels considerably below the average for the particular grade. On the other hand, the reading achievement of the class may be well above average.

Whatever the average reading level and range of a class, the teacher must adapt instruction to individual levels of achievement. Trying to teach comprehension skills in fourth grade materials to fourth grade students who read at low second grade level is unproductive. The students **and** the teacher will become frustrated.

Comprehension is made up of a number of related and overlapping clusters of subskills. Almost without exception basal reader series and other published instructional materials are built around the idea that comprehension is made up of skills and abilities, rather than being global or unitary in nature. The same statement can be made about standardized reading tests and the approaches taken by reading methodology texts.

Chapman (1974) suggests that theories of comprehension can be categorized into three classes — isolated skills theories, unitary or single skills theories and hierarchically arranged skills clusters. Most published materials reflect closer agreement with the third class — hierarchically arranged skills clusters. A weak area of comprehension is that of theory. Quite frequently in reading about comprehension, it is difficult for one to separate theory from what actually has been determined from research.

A debate has been going on for years about the factors that make up comprehension. Some researchers and theorists contend that comprehension consists only of one or, at most, two factors (Thurstone, 1946; Hunt, 1957; Thorndike, 1972) whereas others (Davis, 1944, 1968; Smith and Barrett, 1974) view comprehension as being made up of multiple factors. For instance, Davis, in his 1968 study, found the following five factors — recalling word meanings; drawing inferences from content; following the structure of a passage; recognizing the writer's purpose, attitude, tone, or mood; and finding answers to questions answered explicitly or in paraphrase. Davis' first two factors, as listed above, appeared to contribute the most to comprehension. Some years ago, a speaker at an International Reading Association convention referred to labels of comprehension skills as a "bucket of worms." He was concerned about the wide variety of labels applied to comprehension skills. Farr (1970, 1972) referred to 50 different comprehension skill labels that he had located in use for test items. Davis (1944), in his study that was mentioned earlier, selected nine to investigate from a "list of several hundred skills, many of which overlapped." His several hundred skills came from a review of published materials.

Main ideas, details and relations usually are on all lists, but beyond these, labels vary considerably. Quite frequently, though, when labels are brushed aside and the learner activities are examined, much more similarity is found.

Some of the variation in labels applied to the skills of comprehension may arise from the view taken by the person who is naming the skills. Simons (1971) delineates among uses of comprehension (answering questions involving main ideas), procedures for teaching comprehension (underlining topical sentences) and psychological processes involved in reading comprehension (understanding what the paragraph is about).

Even though materials used in reading programs agree on a skills approach, they certainly do not agree on how these skills are divided or on just what the subskills are. Burkhard (1945) stated that reading was "made up of at least 214 separate abilities." Some examples of

numbers of comprehension skills in currently used materials are Scott Foresman Reading (1981), seven clusters of 57 subskills for comprehension and literary skills; Holt Basic Reading (1980), five clusters with 58 subskills for comprehension and literary skills; Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Bookmark Reading Program (1980), two clusters with 64 subskills for comprehension and literary skills; Wisconsin Design for Reading Skill Development (1973), six clusters with 42 subskills; and Prescriptive Reading Inventory (1972), four clusters with 53 subobjectives. Numbers, numbers, numbers! The listing could go on for more than 100 sets of materials — basal readers, reading methodology texts, reading tests. Not only do their lists of skills differ, but so do their hierarchical arrangements of these skills (Carter and Aaron, 1982).

Teachers should help students develop all of the comprehension skills in the scope and sequence of skills being used. Despite the wide variety of labels and varying number of subskills, those who prepare reading methodology texts and publish reading materials for use in instruction show considerable agreement in types of suggestions for the development of comprehension skills. Actually, the differences reside mainly in the names assigned to the skills, how the clusters are divided into subskills and the context in which the skills are taught.

Regardless of what the skill listing is in a program, it is likely to resemble in many respects the one used in these materials. And the teacher must be certain to develop all of the clusters of skills and not just a few. Readers need to comprehend main ideas and details, understand relationships, appreciate and interpret figurative language, and read critically. They need to comprehend literally; they need to comprehend inferentially.

Teachers must guard against overemphasizing just two or three skills clusters at the expense of other, equally important skills clusters. If you are a teacher, do you tend to work more in developing a few skills — because you enjoy teaching those skills — than in improving reading for main ideas and understanding relations? Or are you constantly aware of the total spectrum of skills, and do you plan instruction to develop **all** comprehension skills? The teacher must keep in mind the entire comprehension skills spectrum in order to set the stage for the development of all of the comprehension skills.

Teachers, through their questions, determine in large measure the kinds of reading their students do. The questions that teachers ask and the instructional situations they create in their classrooms stimulate and guide the development of comprehension skills. Six year olds consciously or unconsciously learn soon after entering school to "spot"

the teacher. As long as people are in academic settings, where some sort of evaluation is expected, they are very much aware of what the teacher expects. If the teacher asks questions about detail only, many students will learn to read well for details — probably neglecting most other skills. On the other hand, if the teacher asks a variety of types of questions, students are likely to develop all of the comprehension skills.

In general, teachers appear to do a better job of teaching children and adolescents to read for literal meaning. Questions aimed toward developing competence in getting literal meaning — where answers to questions are directly stated in the text — might be of this nature. How many men took part in the battle? What did Don say when Joan came into the room? When did Uncle John arrive? Where did it happen? Who solved the problem? Though these are relatively simple questions, literal questions may be complex. For example, review the pathway followed by the blood as it moves from the heart, through the human body and back to the heart again. What were the causes of World War II as they are stated in the text? The key element is that the information that will answer the question is **directly stated** in the selection. It may be a main idea, a detail, an understanding of a relation — any directly stated idea in the selection.

The inferential questions are those that go beyond the directly stated material; responding to these questions involves thinking beyond the information presented in the selection. These questions lead to reading for inferred meaning, drawing generalizations and evaluating critically. Sometimes the term creative reading also is used.

The how and why questions usually lead to thinking beyond the facts. Some examples follow. How did Mary solve her problem? How do you think Joe felt when he saw Bill? Why do you answer as you do? Questions involving who, when, where, and what may also be used to develop competence in inferential reading. Look at these questions. Who do you think actually did leave the door open? When could it have happened? Where do you think it could have gone? What do you think happened just before our story began?

Examples above reflect teacher questions. Teachers also elicit student questions, and at higher reading levels they emphasize the importance of students raising their own questions **before** they read. Whether teacher-made or student-made, questions that lead to the development of **all** the comprehension skills should be raised. The questions involving thinking with the facts certainly should be included.

Comprehension skills instruction, to be effective, must be systematic and well-planned. Learning becomes a hit or miss proposition unless it is well-planned and carried out in a systematic manner. If comprehension skills are taught only in an incidental or opportunistic

manner, a thorough job will not be done. A few of the skills are likely to be developed, but solid development of all comprehension skills will not likely occur.

A lesson plan pattern often followed in initial teaching of a skill is (1) teach, (2) practice, (3) reteach, (4) apply, (5) test, (6) reteach, if necessary. It is easy to omit all except the practice, apply, and test phases. The teaching phase involves telling, showing, participating or discovering. The telling and showing are done by teachers with the student becoming more active in participation and discovery. Whatever the approach — or combination of approaches — the teacher is central to skill instruction.

One of the best ways to assure full development of the comprehension skills is to use some sort of a guide, such as a scope and sequence chart, for assuring full coverage in instruction. In schools in which basal readers are used, the scope and sequence for the development of comprehension skills in the core basal materials would be an excellent guide. Publishers usually can supply a scope and sequence chart for all skills in their programs. Skills listings, keyed to activities related to each skill, are presented in the teacher's guidebook accompanying each component of the program.

Sometimes management systems, like the Wisconsin Design for Reading Skill Development (1973), are used to guide skill instruction. Where this is being done, the major "roadmap" for skill development usually is that program.

The subskills listed under each of the skills clusters in Chapter 2 may be used as a guide for the sequencing of comprehension skill instruction. Each subskill is assigned a level at which the subskill is introduced. It is assumed that once the skill is introduced, continued development of that skill will be expected at higher levels.

Once a skill has been taught, adequate practice should be scheduled to maintain a desirable level of competence. Maintaining gains that have been made is also an important aspect of reading instruction. Most teachers at one time or another think they have taught a skill and later discover that a given child seems never to have possessed that skill. This instructional hazard is less likely to affect learners in programs where periodic reviews of previously learned skills are a part of that program. So-called mastery learning is especially vulnerable unless enough practice of "mastered" skills is scheduled to keep the skills at the desired level.

Many published materials, especially some of the basal reader series, have suggested review activities worked into lesson plans or in exercises. Even so, it is the teacher's responsibility to diagnose

constantly to keep an eye on the maintenance level of skills tht have been taught.

Teaching is not necessarily an outgrowth of testing or asking questions. Durkin (1980, 1981) and others have emphasized that testing is **not** teaching and that much of observed comprehension activities in classrooms can be labeled as testing rather than teaching. Activities that children perform individually, such as completing a workbook exercise, can fall short of teaching if there is no corrective teaching growing from incorrect responses. Further, teachers' questions fail to teach if corrective teaching does not occur around items missed, and giving the correct answer with no further explanation falls far short of effective instruction.

Comprehension instruction in some instances may also be made less effective by too rapid help from the teacher. In reading informational material, a student may give the teacher an incorrect response to a question, and the teacher may immediately tell the student the correct answer. Such a situation offers the teachers an opportunity to teach the student how to read the text to locate the answer. More time is taken in such instances, but the effectiveness of instruction is much greater. It is a matter of dealing in one instance with correct information only, whereas in the other instance instruction involves not only correct information but also instruction in how to read informational material. Some writers would refer to the latter as learning how to process text.

Because of the importance of going **beyond** testing or questioning for effective instruction, each skill cluster discussed in Chapter 2 will contain one or more examples of how to teach a subskill. The other suggestions given at the end of each skills cluster section are in the nature of practice exercises for subskills previously taught to students. They may easily be turned into teaching situations by the teacher giving more detailed guidance before, at the time or after students' respond to the exercise.

Chapter 2
Clusters of Comprehension Skills and Suggestions for Instruction

Eight clusters of comprehension skills are discussed in this chapter. As each skills cluster is presented, a general discussion is followed by a listing of subskills and then by descriptions of activities designed for use in teaching the subskills. The subskills are listed in hierarchical order, with A level being the equivalent of prereading readiness and preprimer; B, primer and first reader levels; C, second grade level; D, third grade level; and E, intermediate and higher grade levels.

Arranging comprehension subskills in sequence is less precise than in the case of decoding skills. The reading difficulty level of the paragraph is a factor to be considered as are the length of the selection and whether or not answers to questions are directly stated in the selection or must be inferred. Getting the main idea from a third grade level paragraph, other factors being equal, should be easier than getting the main idea from a fourth grade paragraph. Getting the main idea from a paragraph should be easier than getting the main idea from an article of several pages. Getting a directly stated main idea should be easier than getting a main idea through inference, if the paragraphs are of equal difficulty level.

Most hierarchical arrangements of skills are based upon judgments of the persons who assembled them. Little solid research evidence can be cited to support skills sequences that have been published. This statement applies to most well-known hierarchical arrangements. The same statement applies to those that are presented below.

The eight skills clusters discussed in this chapter are (1) interpreting the rules of written English, (2) enlarging meaning vocabulary, (3) reading for main ideas and for details, (4) drawing conclusions and closely related skills, (5) understanding relations, (6) interpreting figurative and special language, (7) recognizing literary types and devices and (8) reading critically.

Interpreting the Rules of Written English

Readers are dependent upon the rules of written English for meaning. Very early in their formal instruction in reading, children learn the meanings of periods, commas, question marks and exclamation points. As beginners progress, they add additional punctuation marks to their stores of knowledge. They also learn what a word, sentence and paragraph are. Much of the instruction on these subskills comes in writing instruction, although some attention is given to them in reading instruction.

Punctuation in written material is a poor substitute for intonation (rate, pitch, stress and juncture) in spoken language. Skill, the readers' only cues to the writer's intended meanings are the combinations of written words, the punctuation marks used and the general context. Now review the meanings that the reader might get from these three sentences.

You are going home tonight.

You are going home tonight!

You are going home tonight?

The first may be a simple statement that the person being spoken to is going home tonight. The second, by use of the exclamation point, adds an element of feeling to the statement; it could be joy or surprise. The question mark in the third sentence indicates that the speaker is asking for clarification. The words are the same, but the meanings are different because of the punctuation marks at the ends of the sentences.

Occasionally the writer — or the printer — underlines or italicizes a word for emphasis. Taking the first sentence and emphasizing a different word each time changes the meaning of the sentence each time. The speaker does this with the voice. Either the general context or the highlighting of a word must substitute for this in print. Read each of these five sentences aloud, emphasizing the underlined word.

<u>You</u> are going home tonight.

You <u>are</u> going home tonight.

You are <u>going</u> home tonight.

You are going <u>home</u> tonight.

You are going home <u>tonight</u>.

In the first sentence, <u>you</u> are going, not someone else. In the second, you <u>are</u> going, though you may think you are not. In the third, you are <u>going</u>, not staying. In the fourth, you are going <u>home</u>, not some place else. And in the fifth, you are going home <u>tonight</u>, not tomorrow or the next day.

Meanings may be changed by the tone of voice used — to communicate sadness, surprise, happiness, satire, and so on. The general context must cue the reader to such meanings since punctuation itself cannot accomplish this.

Unless taught, beginning readers are not likely to know what a written word is. They need to know that a word is made up of one or more letters and that it represents a spoken word. Pointing out that the written word has space on both sides may help young readers to develop the concept

of a word. At later times the readers need to learn what sentences and paragraphs are.

The rules of written English govern how the reader interprets a selection. Helping the beginner learn about these conventions usually is given high priority in early reading instruction.

Subskills for interpreting the rules of written English include these.

- Understanding what a word is.
- Interpreting punctuation.
- Understanding what a sentence is.
- Understanding what a paragraph is.

Interpreting the rules of written English teaching example. Place this sentence on the board, "The boy walked to school." Ask a volunteer to read it. If no one can read it, the teacher should read the sentence to them. Then ask if anyone can tell what a sentence is. If no one can, then tell them that a sentence is a complete thought (it tells us something) and begins with a capital letter and ends with a period, question mark or exclamation point. Next ask if what has been written on the board is a sentence. Point out, if children cannot, that it begins with a capital letter, ends with a period and is a complete thought. (If children have difficulty in understanding what a complete thought is, then don't pursue it at this time.)

Now place these three sentences on the board.

Watch the plane take off.
Where is Sam going?
You have a happy birthday!

Go through the same procedure indicated above with each sentence.

Other exercises for interpreting mechanics of writing.

1. Have students tell what a sentence is. Emphasize that it is a complete thought, begins with a capital letter and ends with a period, question mark or exclamation point.
2. Have students tell you what a word is. Lead them to understand that a word has space on both sides and that it represents a spoken word.
3. Write this sentence on the board, "Ben's dog likes to sleep under his bed." Underline the first word and read the sentence, emphasizing the underlined word. Lead students into seeing that the emphasis tells us that it is Ben's dog, not that of someone else. Next, erase the line under Ben's and draw a line under dog. Lead students into seeing that it means Ben's dog, not his cat and so on. Do the same for the following sentences.

Sarah walked down the street.
He fell from his horse.
The chair broke when I sat in it.
Ruth's dress was red with white dots.
My father sat by the road.

Be sure that students understand how the emphasis on a particular word influences the meaning of the sentence and how changing the emphasis to another word changes the meaning of the sentence.

4. Write the following sentences on the board.

   I enjoy going to school.
   Do you really enjoy going to school?
   I enjoy going to school!
   Billy, Joe and Sue are my friends.
   Cathy, my best friend, is sick.

   Ask students to tell what the punctuation mark at the end of each sentence is called and what it means. In the last two sentences ask what the commas mean. Be sure that inaccurate responses are corrected in such a way that the students learn their real meaning.

5. Duplicate for student use. Ask students to point out each word in each sentence.

   He went to Atlanta last night.
   Which one belongs to Mr. Bell?
   Shirley is the best basketball player on our team.
   I wonder if I should stay home today.
   George left the garage door open.

   Lead students to understand that a word in print has a space on each side and that it represents a spoken word. Students do **not** have to identify specific words at this point.

Enlarging Meaning Vocabulary

Knowledge of word meanings is one of the most important ingredients in the reading process. Enlarging meaning vocabulary is a major objective of reading instruction from the prereading readiness phase upward. In large measure, readers extract meaning from a written selection in proportion to the meanings they took with them to the selection. The more word meanings they know, the more readers are likely to obtain additional meaning from the selection.

One of the most widely quoted — and challenged — research studies on reading comprehension, that of Davis (1968), concluded that recalling word meanings was the most important ingredient of comprehension.

The typical child entering first grade knows the meanings of thousands of words. Various estimates have ranged from as low as 6,000 to above 22,000. Exact data are impossible to obtain on the size of meaning vocabulary. Regardless of what the exact average meaning vocabulary is for entering first graders, it is of considerable size — and teachers and parents should continue to work toward enlarging that meaning vocabulary.

Many different kinds of oral and written activities have been used effectively to teach meaning vocabulary. No **one** approach seems to stand out as the **best** instructional approach. However, vocabulary should be taught in context since very few words carry precise meaning when standing alone. For instance, an unabridged dictionary may list more than 200 shades of meaning for the word **set**.

Word meanings are crucial for understanding the printed page. The reader needs precise meanings of words, even though the meaning of a sentence is not the same as the definitions of the individual words that make up that sentence. The sentence meaning depends upon the order of the words in that sentence and upon the general context. For instance, these four sentences contain the same words but have quite different meanings.

The injured man looked at the doctor.

The man looked at the injured doctor.

The doctor looked at the injured man.

The injured doctor looked at the man.

All teachers, including subject area teachers, have responsibilities for helping students to enlarge their meaning vocabularies. Systematic instruction is needed for effective growth, though unplanned activities that arise may provide opportunities which contribute to vocabulary enlargement. Good teachers take advantage of situations that arise to work on vocabulary development.

Though examples of specific instructional activities are presented at the end of this section, a few general guides for instruction will be offered below.

- Teach word meanings in context.
- Discuss meanings of key words encountered in selections — sometimes before, sometimes after reading.
- Use visual aids to enlarge word meanings.
- Encourage children to keep a record of new words whose meanings are learned.

- When words with special meanings (as **mouth** of the river or **bar** graph) are encountered, contrast the special meanings with their general, more frequently used meanings.
- Teach children to use the dictionary efficiently and effectively.

Subskills for enlarging meaning vocabulary are the following.

- Identifies word meanings from oral context.
- Develops understanding of comparison words presented orally (as **same, different, over, under, below, above).**
- Categorizes words presented orally into classes.
- Categorizes words into classes.
- Identifies meanings of synonyms and antonyms.
- Uses grammatical structures as cues to meanings.
- Identifies word meanings from context.
- Identifies meanings of homonyms and homographs.
- Recognizes multiple meanings of words.
- Recognizes new meanings for familiar words.
- Recognizes and understands use of action words.
- Develops an understanding of word origins.
- Understands use of function words.
- Continues to enlarge meaning vocabulary.

Vocabulary from context teaching example. Americans and British have many common terms and meanings of words. However, some meanings of words and phrases used by the British differ from the typical use in America. The underlined word or phrase in each sentence below was located in a London newspaper. Use the context to determine the word or phrase meaning in each.

Six workers were made redundant yesterday. Another three workers are expected to be let go at the end of the month.

The man went missing last Friday. His family has heard nothing from him since that time.

The buskers performed near the park gate. People dropped coins in a can to show their enjoyment of the music.

The fans expected greater enterprise from the team. Team members appeared to lack motivation and hustle.

The Lee family left on holiday. Their vacation ends just before school begins.

Place the five groups of sentences on the board or duplicate for student use. Read the introductory sentences aloud to students. Next, have a volunteer read the first item. If necessary, call attention again to the task — to determine the meaning of the underlined words by using the remainder of the paragraph. Call attention to **made redundant** and then

ask students what the phrase means. If a correct meaning is given, ask for the context clue ("let go') in the sentences that helps to determine the meaning. If none can give the correct meaning in response to your question, read the second sentence, emphasizing "let go." Then ask what "let go" means. Responses are likely to be "laid off," "released," "lost their jobs" or something similar. Lead students to recognize that "made redundant" has the same meaning as "let go."

Go over as many of the remaining four paragraphs as are needed to teach the process, using a pattern similar to the one outlined here.

Other exercises for enlarging meaning vocabulary. Some possible teaching examples follow.

1. What are the meanings of the following words as used in the selection you have just read? If the context does not give you the meaning of a word and you do not already know the meaning, use the glossary or your dictionary.

engineer	conductor
gandy dancer	fireman
crossties	whistlestop
boiler	station
pullman	diner

2. Most words have more than one meaning, and some words have many different meanings, depending upon the context. On the line following each sentence, write the meaning of the underlined word as it is used in that sentence.

   She wore a diamond ring. _____
   I heard the phone ring. _____
   She drew a ring around the word. _____

   You look like a tramp. _____
   Don't tramp through here! _____
   It was a tramp steamer. _____

   The bit was in the horse's mouth. _____
   He bit me on the leg. _____
   I have a bit more to do. _____

3. On the line to the left, write a synonym of the underlined word in each sentence.

   _____ She placed her hat on her head and then left.
   _____ He departed for home.
   _____ The small girl had lost her mother.
   _____ It was a big elephant.

4. On the line to the left, write an antonym of the underlined word in each sentence.

_____ It was a cold night.
_____ She was a sorrowful child.
_____ He despised the sight of spinach.
_____ Mary has pretty teeth.

5. Vehicles of transportation in groups have different names. For instance a group of trucks is called a **fleet** of trucks, and a group of wagons, one behind the other, is called a wagon **train.** Fill in the blank in each phrase below with the correct name for the vehicles in groups.

a _____ of police cars
a _____ of Air Force planes
a _____ of ships
a _____ of motorcycles
a _____ of submarines
a _____ of buses
a _____ of elevators

6. Words used for the same object sometimes differ from one English speaking country to another. In the space provided write the American word (or words) for the British word underscored in each sentence.

He rode the tram. _____
John placed the tyre in the boot. _____
Mary's flat was beautiful. _____
He took the lift to the third floor. _____
Bill was watching the telly. _____
Mildred went to the cinema. _____
Do you want a sweet with your meal? _____

7. On the line to the right of the animal name, write what the baby of the species is called.

bear _____	fox _____
lion _____	tiger _____
elephant _____	horse _____
deer _____	cow _____
hog _____	chicken _____
dog _____	sheep _____

8. Each sentence below is a common proverb, motto or saying written in words other than those commonly used. Write the original version on the line following each sentence.

Members of the human race who reside in structures composed of an amorphous inorganic transparent substance should refrain from projecting a concretion of earthy matter.

People who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones.

An igneous revolving mass fails to accumulate bryophytic plants.

A rolling stone gathers no moss.

If the cover for the invertebrate organ of locomotion matches the size, attire yourself in it.

If the shoe fits, wear it.

A smitten canine vociferates.

A hit dog hollers.

Indiscriminate selection of an ancient spot of refuge in a tumultuous outburst.

Any old port in a storm.

A container under surveillance fails to emit steam.

A watched pot never boils.

9. Use the correct transition word or phrase for each blank.

but	furthermore	still
however	nevertheless	in contrast
also	on the other hand	even though
although	yet	

_____ Bert was in on the joke, the prank _____ frightened him. _____, he was able to keep the other boys from seeing his fear. _____, Jack had screamed when the firecracker exploded — _____ he had _____ been in on the joke.

Reading for Main Ideas and Details

Two very closely related clusters of skills are those of identifying main ideas and identifying details. They are discussed together because of their interrelatedness. Details, to be meaningful, must be organized around main ideas. Main ideas will be discussed first and then details.

Extracting main ideas from text is an important cluster of comprehension skills. Occasionally children encounter difficulties in learning how to read for main ideas. The student who, when asked to tell what a story is about, responds by giving a play-by-play repeat of the selection shows an inability to state the main idea.

Getting main ideas from a selection is essential for organizing details. Main ideas serve as a focal point for supporting details; the details are organized around main ideas. For this reason much of the instruction aimed toward teaching reading for details should also involve extracting the main ideas that the details support.

Instruction on subskills in the main idea cluster begins in the prereading readiness phase. At this early level, activities are at the listening level or involve interpretation of pictures. Instruction continues at increasingly more difficult levels as the learner makes progress.

The sequence for introducing subskills is based upon three factors — length of selection, whether the main idea is directly stated in the material or must be inferred and whether the response involves recognition or recall. Extracting the main idea of a paragraph is considered easier than extracting the main idea of a longer selection, such as in a story or a chapter. Restating the main idea in the reader's words or in the words used in the selection is easier than having to infer the main idea because it is not stated directly in the selection. Selecting the correct main idea from among three or four presented in a test exercise is easier than having to recall — with no possibilities being presented — the main idea of a selection.

Main ideas, whether from a paragraph or a longer selection, must usually be implied by the reader. Occasionally, the text may state something like this. "This selection is about . . ." In such cases, the main idea is literally stated. Locating a directly stated topic sentence also may involve recognizing a literally stated main idea. Usually though, main ideas are not presented literally in the text; the reader must infer them.

Instruction in reading for details should be merged insofar as possible with instruction in reading for main ideas. The main ideas are the focal points for organizing details. Isolated details in themselves are seldom

of much use to the learner; they need to be organized, with related ideas being grouped so the learner can see relations.

Many teachers in the past have overemphasized instruction on reading for details to the neglect of some of the other clusters of comprehension skills. Teachers' questions sometimes include a disproportionately large percentage of questions aimed at extracting factual details that are directly stated in the material being used. Details are important and should not be neglected, but other skills areas are also important and should receive adequate attention in instruction.

Reading for details may appear deceptively simple. A question is asked; the reader reads for the answer. If the question is concerned with how many colors were in Mary's skirt — when the number is clearly presented in the printed matter or can be deduced easily from given information, it is simple. The secondary student who is asked to read to remember how the blood moves from the heart, through the body, and back to the heart will likely find the task a fairly difficult one. A further question might be raised: Is it an important learning task for the secondary student to learn how the blood flows through the body?

A teacher must make decisions about facts that are important enough to be remembered. Being able to identify all the bones in the human body would be important for a medical doctor -- but not for the typical middle grade student. (And these bones would be main ideas for the medical doctor, rather than details.)

Following printed directions involves details as well as sequencing, and, therefore, it will be discussed here. Teachers frequently are disturbed by children failing to follow clearly written directions. And occasionally adults fail to follow written directions on order forms or in filing income tax returns. Under some circumstances, following directions precisely becomes crucial. Misinterpreting directions for administering — or mixing — medicine could be fatal. Albeit that misinterpretations are usually not so crucial, teachers need to work toward developing readers who can and will follow written directions accurately.

One of the practices that contributes to children's failure to follow directions accurately will be discussed here. In a crowded classroom, the busy teacher often gives to much help — and too quickly — to the child who misinterprets directions — or who fails to read them and just guesses at what is to be done. Although to have the child reread the directions to see what he or she was directed to do takes a few seconds longer, it will pay dividends in that child's correctly learning to follow directions.

Subskills for extracting main ideas and details are the following.

- Identifies and interprets details in pictures and in stories presented orally.
- Locates and interprets main ideas in pictures and in stories presented orally.
- Selects title for a picture.
- Selects title for a story presented orally.
- Identifies and interprets details in written material.
- Recognizes and recalls main idea in picture series.
- Recognizes and recalls main idea in material read.
- Uses details to answer questions.
- Recognizes and recalls details to support main idea in material read.
- Identifies details to support the main idea.
- Uses details to follow directions.
- States summarizing sentence.
- Locates details to verify answers and opinions.
- Identifies topic sentence in paragraph.
- Identifies topic sentence at beginning, middle and end of paragraph.
- Skims for recall of main idea in longer selection.
- Infers main idea of paragraph.

Main idea teaching exercise. Place the following on the board or otherwise duplicate for student use.

Dogs come in many sizes and weights. They range in height from a few inches to several feet. They range in weight from less than a pound to several hundred pounds. My brother John's miniature poodle weighs less than a pound. Bill's St. Bernard weighs more than 200 pounds.

Which is the best title for this paragraph?

My Brother John's Poodle

Bill's 200 Pound St. Bernard

Sizes and Weights of Dogs

From Inches to Feet

Read the selection aloud or have a student read it aloud. Then read the question. Tell students that one of the titles in the four tells what the paragraph is about — that is, gives its main idea. Tell them also that three of the titles are **not** main ideas but that they are details that tell something about the main idea. Read the first title (My Brother John's Poodle) and ask if that is the main idea and if it is not, why it is not. The discussion should leave students with the clear idea that the first title refers only to one sentence. Follow the same procedure for other titles. Students should understand that the title (Sizes and Weights of Dogs)

tells what the entire paragraph is about. Illustrate this by showing that each sentence in the paragraph supports this title. It may be pointed out that the first sentence in the paragraph actually contains the main idea. (If identifying the topic sentence has been taught, you may point out that in this paragraph the first sentence is the topic sentence.)

Other exercises for main ideas and details. Some sample teaching exercises for reading for main ideas and details follow.

1. Check the statement that best tells what the story is about.

   _____ Pooh Bear went to visit rabbit and ate with him.
   _____ Pooh Bear got stuck in the door to rabbit's house and had to be rescued.
   _____ Pooh Bear was singing a song that he had created as he went toward rabbit's house.

2. Write another title for "Pooh Bear Goes Visiting."

3. In one short paragraph tell the main happenings in "Pooh Bear Goes Visiting."

4. Which statement best tells what the story is about? Check the correct one.

   _____ The bomber crew flew a night mission and ran into trouble.
   _____ The pilot saved the navigator's life by bringing down a burning bomber safely.
   _____ The navigator was caught in a burning bomber without a parachute.

5. Bill and Mary were eating lunch on the plane trip to New York. Just as Bill raised his coffee cup to drink, the plane lurched. Bill's coffee splashed on Mary's new white dress. The hostess helped Mary clean her dress. Bill was sorry, but he could not help it.

   Check the sentence that tells what the paragraph is about.

   _____ Bill and Mary ate lunch on the plane.
   _____ Bill spilled coffee on Mary's dress.
   _____ The hostess helped Mary clean her dress.

6. Look at this picture and tell me what the picture is about.

7. Look at this picture and tell me which one of these three titles best fits the picture.

8. Skim the selection to get the general idea of what it is about.

9. Underline the topic sentences in the following paragraphs. Then write "beginning," "ending," "beginning and ending," "middle," or "not given" in the space to the left to indicate the type of paragraph each is.

_____ Mrs. Jates watched Sid jump the clay into the big hole. Though she could hardly believe it, the road was finally being patched. It had been bouncing cars around for weeks.

_____ Ben surveyed the new territory from his perch atop the water trough. Mr. Zarboro was entering the barn door to his right. He posed no threat, thought Ben. But what he saw to his left made Ben freeze with terror. Mahitibel, the Zarboro cat, was also perched on the water trough. Her big eyes were focused directly on Ben!

_____ Friday was Mary's happiest day of the week. Though she enjoyed teaching, working with 30 pupils taxed her energy and strength. By the end of each week, she was worn out. Friday was truly the best day of every week!

_____ Jim noted that the clock had struck six. He looked at his watch to verify the time. He took one last puff on his cigarette and then tossed it away. Turning abruptly, he hastened toward the church entrance.

_____ Sue's heart almost burst with pride. Miss Stanton had just announced the winner of the class campaign. Sue was the new president of the class!

10. Tell me everything you remember about the selection that you just read.

11. Skim the selection to see when the battle was fought.

12. Mary bought an automobile. Her new car is golden yellow. This is the first Chrysler that she has owned. The car she traded in on the new one was a Mercury. The old car had 101,332 miles on it, and it needed its fourth set of tires.

Place a **T** by each correct statement and an **F** by each false statement.

_____ Mary's new car is yellow with a gold top.
_____ Her new car is a Mercury.
_____ This is the first Mercury that Mary has owned.
_____ Mary traded in a Chrysler.
_____ Mary's old car needed a set of tires.

13. Follow these directions.

    a. Put an X on the square
    b. Draw a line through the first **a** in this sentence.
    c. Write your name at the end of this sentence.

14. Read the selection and then list the animals that give birth to their young.

Drawing Conclusions, Predicting Outcomes, Implying Character Traits and Feelings, Drawing Generalizations and Drawing Conclusions

An important group of related skills includes drawing conclusions, predicting outcomes, implying character traits and feelings and drawing generalizations. In all four skills conclusions are drawn from information presented in the text and from related knowledge that the reader already possesses. In predicting outcomes the conclusion is an implication about what happens next or about what the facts in the selection will lead to on the basis of logic and reading knowledge of how things work. In implying character traits and feelings the conclusions are about traits and feelings of characters in the selection. In drawing generalizations the conclusion is a rule that can be deduced from the information presented in the text. In fact, any time an inference is made, the reader has drawn a conclusion. In this section, however, the four types will be discussed, with drawing conclusions reflecting a generic use of the skill.

Drawing conclusions. The ability to draw conclusions logically from ideas presented in the text is important in a wide variety of content. The following questions are designed to lead children into drawing conclusions (when the conclusions are **not** directly stated in the text.) What season of the year is it, and how can you tell? From the description, where do you think Sally is? Why? What occupation does she have, and how do you know? The ability to draw conclusions logically from ideas presented in the text is important in a wide variety of content. The conclusion drawn by the reader is based on the text and involves the reader's knowledge about the topic being treated. Through use of known facts, the reader concludes something. Drawing conclusions of necessity involves implied meaning; it uses the stated information but also uses general knowledge as a basis for the conclusion drawn.

Predicting outcomes. Predicting outcomes is a special case of drawing conclusions. From ideas given in the text, the reader weighs the evidence and decides what the outcome is likely to be. Although directly stated information is involved, predicting outcomes falls into the category of implicit skills — since it must go beyond literal meaning. Several bits of information given in the text may be put together by the

reader as a base for predicting an outcome. A peron reading a newspaper story of a continuing nature may predict what will eventually happen, as the outcome of a court case or a decision related to an action of the state legislature. The outcomes are predicted logically, not through wild guessing. This ability should involve convergent thinking, with the outcome predicted being tied to the information presented in the passage.

Implying character traits and feelings. The subskills dealing with characterization focus upon interpreting feelings and actions of characters. They also include noting change in character. Although these subskills sometimes are literal in that they are directly stated in the text, they often involve implied meanings. When implications are drawn, interpreting feelings or actions of characters is another instance of drawing conclusions.

The subskills dealing with characterization focus upon interpreting and evaluating feelings and actions of characters, noting change in character and recognizing and anticipating the plot in fiction. To become emotionally involved in fiction or biography, the reader must react to the characters and the events that influence their actions. "Feeling" readers chuckle to themselves when something funny happens, cry inside when a main character becomes sad, join a leading character in fearing and despising the antagonist and get excited as adventure unfolds. Readers who notice how Gurgi, in Lloyd Alexander's books, changes as people come to depend upon him will appreciate Gurgi as a person. Anticipating the plot in mystery and adventure stories heightens the pleasure in reading.

Children and adolescents must be helped to understand that the behavior of real life characters in biography or autobiography or characters in fiction is influenced by their social and physical environments. Often in real life and in fiction, characters change as circumstances change. Being aware of these changes helps readers to understand how their own lives are influenced by people and actions in which they get involved.

Book-length selections offer good opportunities for the development of characterization over time. Short selections also can be used in teaching characterization, especially if the focus is upon descriptions or feelings.

Drawing generalizations. Drawing generalizations is another type of drawing conclusions. Readers observe from a few cases a principle that holds for a larger group of cases, as an entire class. Children note that dogs bark and that other animals **do not** bark, that they make other sounds. They generalize that only dogs bark. Students note that the several books by Beverly Cleary that they have read are interesting and

humorous. They generalize that Beverly Cleary is an interesting and humorous writer.

Other types of drawing conclusions. Several other comprehension skills which have already been discussed may be classified as special cases of drawing conclusions. When the main idea is not directly stated in the text — and it often is not — the reader must draw a conclusion about what the passage or longer selection is about. Although cause-effect relations are sometimes stated directly in the text, quite often they are implicit. The reader must put information together and draw a conclusion about the relaions between effect and the precipitating cause or causes. When details supporting a min idea are not directly stated, they must be determined implicitly — and this process may involve drawing a conclusion about the detail that supports a main idea. These skills will not be discussed further in this section.

Drawing conclusions teaching example. Jake's father had cautioned Jake and Bill to eat only in good restaurants while they were visiting the city. The two boys had been walking for several hours and were hungry. Bill said, "Look! That restaurant has a sign in the window that says **Recommended by Joe Latelle.** You think that's a good one?" "I don't know," laughed Jake, "Look at the name of the restaurant — **Latelle's!**"

1. Who is Joe Latelle? Why do you answer as you do?
2. What do you think the boys will do? Why do you answer as you do?
3. Are Jake and Bill brothers? Why do you answer as you do?
4. Why did Jake's father likely caution the boys to eat only in good restaurants?
5. Why do you think the boys were walking for several hours in the city?
6. Did the two boys live in the city? Why do you answer as you do?
7. Why do you think the sign was placed in the window?
8. Why were the boys hungry?

Duplicate the above exercise for student use. Tell students that all the questions following the paragraph will call for them to draw some conclusion from the facts given in the paragraph. The conclusion must fit — it must make sense. Test each possible conclusion presented by students to see if it fits logically with the ideas in the paragraph. You may wish to offer some illogical or unfounded possible conclusions for students to judge. Examples are for item 1 as follows. He's the father of one of the boys; he's the mayor of the town; or he's the manager of the supermarket up the street. Develop the idea that the conclusion drawn must be in line with the facts given in the selection. Avoid encouraging wild guesses on the part of students. Guide them toward logical

conclusions. (It may be appropriate under other circumstances to encourage creative thinking, but this exercise demands the drawing of **logical** conclusions.)

Other teaching activities.

1. When children are reading a selection in an instructional setting (or when the teacher is reading to students), use questions and activities similar to these at appropriate times.

   - What do you think will happen next? Why? Now read the next part to to see if you were right.
   - What do you think the solution will be to the story problem? Why?
   - How old do you think Aunt Daisy is? Why do you think so?
   - How do you think Mary feels now? Why do you answer as you do?
   - What do you think happened just before our story began? Why do you answer as you do?

2. Use questions similar to these to develop drawing conclusions.

   - Is the story setting today, a long time ago or in the future? How can you tell?
   - What did he really mean when he said, "You can come in if you must."? Why do you answer as you do?
   - What is the season in the story? How can you tell?
   - What is the main problem of the major character? How did he solve it?
   - What kind of person is the narrator in the book? Why do you conclude as you do?

3. Use questions similar to the following (which are based on specific books) to reinforce drawing conclusions.

   In *Shadow of a Bull* what was the major problem of the main character? How did he solve it?

   What do you think really made Queenie Peavy change? Was it fear of going to the reformitory, dislike for herself, loss of respect for her father, some combination of these or what? Why do you think as you do?

   What kind of person was the narrator in *A Taste of Blackberries?* Why do you answer as you do?

   Why did Tiger Eyes go to live with her aunt? How did she feel about it in the beginning? Near the end of the book?

   In Elizabeth Yates' *The Seventh One*, Tom's seven dogs spanned almost 60 years, and each had a personality of its own. Which of the dogs would you rather have owned and why? Do you think

the dogs influenced Tom more than, the same as or less than Tom influenced them? Why do you answer as you do?

4. Duplicate the following for student use. Ask students to identify the cause and the effect in each.

   Mrs. Byrd heard a crashing sound in the living room. As she rushed in, she saw a broken window and a softball lying on the floor. She looked through the broken window. Two boys stood in the street, looking toward the house. One of the boys had a bat in his hand.

   Rex looked anxiously toward the clock. If he could get by without being called upon for five more minutes, everything would be fine. His heart sank as he heard Mrs. Ramsey say, "Rex, tell us your answer to number 7."

   Travelers in the California desert will see very few types of plants. They will see several varieties of cactus that have been able to survive in the desert area.

5. Duplicate the following for student use. Ask students to identify the setting for each and to tell why they concluded as they did.

   Jack felt ill at ease in his dress clothes. He squirmed on the uncomfortable seat, and his sister gave him a nasty look. Just then the choir began to sing.

   It was Saturday, and Sara was running late. She had overslept. She hurried through breakfast and dashed into the den. Her brother Joe said, "It's nine o'clock, and you just made it in time! Sit over there. Don't block my view."

   Marcia found an empty seat on the aisle near the front. She had to look up at a sharp angle to see the screen. She would rather have a seat closer to the back, but those seats were already filled.

   The crowd was deafening. All 80,000 people in the stadium seemed to be yelling at the top of their voices. Number 34 crossed the goal line, and the referee signaled a touchdown!

   He tapped the stand to get the group's attention. All eyes focused on him. He lifted his hands. He suddenly lowered his right hand, and the first notes of the concert could be heard.

Understanding Relations

This cluster of skills involves understanding how two or more events, actions, objects or other things are related. Some of the important relations are time, sequence, space, part-whole, class, analogous and cause-effect. Each of these will be discussed briefly.

Sequence and time relations. Understanding sequence in time and distance in time between events are important in a variety of reading settings. Following the plot of a fiction selection involves understanding sequence. Sometimes, when the flashback technique has been used by the author, the reader must reorder the happenings in time sequence. Time relations play an extremely important role in historical material. By noting sequence of events and how close they occur in time, the reader often can see how one event has a causal influence upon another. Social studies teachers frequently use time lines (sometimes called time graphs) to show distance in time among events as a way of focusing attention upon causal relations.

The six-year-old child typically has little knowledge of time concepts. In response to an early afternoon question about what he has done since getting up in the morning, he is likely to respond in haphazard order rather than in sequence. Changes in understanding relations result from intellectual maturing and from experience. Learning the differences among yesterday, today and tomorrow come in part from maturity and in part from the child's learning from parents, teachers, siblings or others. Adults find it difficult to conceive of a thousand years in history, for example, or even the change in day of the week that occurs when the international date line is crossed. The latter involves both time and space relations. Is there any wonder that time relations often are puzzling to children?

An interesting instructional task is to help the reader to understand the historical setting of a selection. Children who have lived only in times of automobiles and television may have difficulty in realizing that Abraham Lincoln or the pioneers moving westward had neither automobile nor television. Fortunately, though, many children have learned something about historical settings in fiction and factual presentations from their televiewing.

The first grade teacher who has children act out "Goldilocks and the Three Bears" or any other selection involving sequence is working on understanding relations. Many children will come into school with backgrounds reflecting parental help on relations by story telling and games. This cluster of subskills begins to be taught quite early and then continues for some time.

Space relations. Relations involving physical space are important in several content areas as well as in fiction. Sometimes these relations are directly stated whereas at other times they must be inferred by the reader. Examples of directly stated space relations are these. "Athens is approximately 70 miles northeast of Atlanta." "He walked two blocks east, four blocks south, and there before him was the statue." "The room length was 20 feet whereas its width was 12 feet. It had 240 square feet in it." Examples of space relations that must be inferred are as follows. "He walked one mile toward the rising sun, turned right and walked two miles and then turned right again and walked a mile. In what direction was he last walking?" "The room is 12 feet wide and 20 feet long. How many square feet does it contain?

Part-whole relations. Sometimes part-whole relations are thought of as a part of vocabulary development. Regardless of where it is categorized, part-whole relations should be taught. These relations involve recognition that one thing is a part of another. In a sense, part-whole relations may be thought of as class relations though they are being discussed separately here. "A nose and eyes are parts of a face." "A stanza is a part of a poem." "A coat, pants and vest are parts of a suit." In these instances the relation is expressed literally. "When Mary looked back, she saw an unfamiliar figure walking about 100 feet behind her. Chills ran up and down her spine. Then she recalled that the police chief had told her that a plainsclothesman would follow her that day. Maybe the thief would try to get back in touch with her. If so, someone would be nearby to help. It just might be a part of the chief's plan to nab the thief. The thought still didn't allay her fears." In this selection the reader must infer that the man following Mary is a plainsclothesman and that he is a part of a larger plan for nabbing the theif.

Class relations. Another type of relation is that of class relations. This subskill may also be thought of as a part of vocabulary development. The reader must recognize that one or more objects, actions or things are members of some larger category. Carrots and peas are vegetables; dogs, cats and pigs are animals. Rain, sleet and snow are types of precipitation.

Analogous relations. Noting similarities in two objects, actions or events is an important skill that must be taught. "How are a peach and a pear alike?" is a question that is designed to elicit an analogous relation. Occasionally, the item aimed toward the development of these relations may take this form. "A bird is to wings as a dog is to _____."

Cause and effect relations. Cause and effect relations are found in a wide variety of content. They play an important role in social studies and science as well as in fiction. The reader must see the connection between some effect and the precipitating cause or causes. Observe

the causal relation in the following sentence. "Joe couldn't go because he had homework to do." The effect is that Joe cannot go; the cause is that he has homework to do. In this instance the relation is directly stated, and the word **because** is an obvious cue to the causal relation. When the cause and effect relation is directly stated in the text, signal words or phrases often are used, such as **because, caused, by, resulted in, brought about by, since** and similar words or phrases. At times the text may not use a signal word or phrase and still leave no room for doubt about a causal relation. The text may read as follows. "Joe's mother told him that he could not go with Bill. He had not completed his homework."

Although no statement is made to link the effect (Joe cannot go) with the cause (homework still to be completed), the two sentences, one following the other, leave little doubt that there is a causal relation between the two actions. Nevertheless, this writer considers such statements to be implied in that the reader must go beyond the printed sentences to connect cause and effect.

In many instances, perhaps in most, causal relations must be inferred. Another illustration of a situation in which the cause and effect relation must be inferred is this. "Bernice glared angrily at Sam as she wiped the snow from her coat. Sam laughed as he picked up another snowball." Here the reader calls upon past knowledge to make the cause and effect relation. Bernice is angry (effect) because Sam hit her with a snowball (cause).

Subskills of the understanding relations cluster are these.

- Recognizes opposite relations.
- Recognizes class relations.
- Recognizes sequence in pictures and orally presented stories.
- Retells an orally presented story in sequential order.
- Recognizes part-whole relations.
- Recognizes sequence in written selections.
- Retells a story in sequential order.
- Recognizes cause and effect relations.
- Organizes events into sequential order.
- Interprets flashback technique.
- Reorganizes sentences in scrambled paragraph.
- Reorganizes poorly organized or scrambled selection.
- Infers events before selection begins.
- Infers logical next happening.
- Recognizes time relations.
- Recognizes analogous relations.

Suggested exercises that may be used as teaching examples are these.

1. After each sentence is read to you, tell what will happen next.

   The girl put on her swim suit, went out to her car and drove to the beach.

   The boy picked up his glove, put his cap on and ran out the door.

   The woman took a coke from the refrigerator, opened the can, and poured coke in a glass.

2. What happened just after Pooh Bear got stuck?

   What did Jim see just before he decided not to jump?

   What did Aunt Daisy do next?

Cause and effect relations teaching examples. Place the following on the board or otherwise duplicate for student use.

Juanita was late for school because the school bus broke down on the way to school. Why was Juanita late for school?

The small boy looked at his father and mother get into the car. They waved good-bye. The boy began to cry and grabbed the hand of his baby-sitter. Why did the small boy cry?

Tell students that you are going to ask them to find cause and effect relations in the two paragraphs. Remind them that the effect is what happens as a result of some earlier cause. Write on the board Cause as the heading for one column and Effect as the heading for a second column. Ask students to tell in the first sentence what happened last. Write a phrase about this under the Effect column. Then ask what caused it. Write a phrase about this under Cause. Do the same for the second paragraph. Your completed example would resemble this.

Cause	**Effect**
Bus broke down	Juanita late for school
Father and mother left	Boy cried

Point out that in these exercises that the questions also tell what the effects were.

Ask students to tell you whether the cause and effect relation in each is directly stated or implied. (Explain if necessary that directly stated means that the cause and effect is actually stated — with the word "because" being a clue — and that implied means that the reader has to use information he or she has learned at an earlier time to identify the cause and effect relation. In the second paragraph the reader must know that small children usually do not want their parents to leave them and that they may cry when they are left by parents.)

Other exercises for relations. Suggested exercises that may be used as teaching examples are these.

1. Tell the story as it happened. (sequence)

   Arrange these in the order in which they happened in the story. (sequence)

   _____ Several explosions shook the plane.
   _____ The pilot saw the navigator lying on the floor.
   _____ The pilot's ejection seat failed to work.
   _____ The plane climbed to 34,000 feet.
   _____ The plane landed safely.
   _____ The pilot gave the order to bail out.
   _____ The pilot struggled to bring the plane down.

2. Check the sentence that tells what Aunt Daisy did **just after** she lost her shoes. (sequence) (Sample based on specific story.)

   _____ She ate pancakes.
   _____ She found her pan.
   _____ She decides to visit Mrs. King.

3. Check the sentence that tells what Aunt Daisy did **just before** she ate pancakes. (sequence) (Sample based on specific story.)

   _____ She lost her shoes.
   _____ She found her pan.
   _____ She decided to visit Mrs. King.

4. Write beside each word in the first column the word from the second column that is opposite in meaning. (opposite)

angry	clean
soft	closed
minority	happy
dirty	loud
open	majority

5. Which of these are vegetables and which are fruits? (class)

potato	pears
cabbage	orange
grape	peas
lemon	tomato
beans	apple

6. Why did Mary get frightened? (cause-effect)

7. How did Shelt hurt his foot? (cause-effect)

8. What happened just after school began? (sequence)

9. What happened first? second? third? (sequence)
10. When did Joe arrive at the airport? (time)
11. When did the story take place? How do you know? (time)
12. Where did the accident happen? (place)
13. Locate Atlanta on the map. (place)
14. Toe is to foot as finger is to _____. (analogous)
15. How are a chipmunk and a squirrel alike? (analogous)
16. Is a horse larger or smaller than a dog? (size)
17. Is Bill larger or smaller than Jim? (size)

Interpreting Figurative and Special Language

Although this cluster of skills often is treated as a part of literary skills and techniques, it is handled separately here. Interpreting and appreciating figurative and special language is crucial in certain subject areas. Literature and social studies, more than many other subject areas, contain figurative language. Titles of stories and books frequently are figurative rather than literal, as in Betsy Byer's *The Cybil War*, Lloyd Alexander's *Book of Three* and *The High King*, Judy Blume's *Superfudge* and *Tiger Eyes*, Madeleine L'Engle's *Dragon's in the Water* and Delores Beckman's *My Own Private Sky*. Social studies material may contain references to "job erosion," "splitting the country apart" or other figurative expressions designed to get points across to the reader. Readers not only need to interpret the figurative language, they also need to know why the writer used this mode of expression.

By contrasting the figurative with the literal, the student will quickly detect that the writer had painted a better word picture by using figurative language.

Sports pages in the daily newspapers offer good teaching material in the figurative language area. Sports teams are Bulldogs, Tigers, Panthers, Gophers or some other animal. And headline writers frequently pull out all stops — "Bulldogs Beat Badgers," "Army Sinks Navy," "Air Force Shot Down by Colorado" and "Tennessee Tumbles to Tech," for example.

Many kinds of figurative language are used in literature. The reader who can interpret the meaning and appreciates why it was written figuratively rather than literally does not necessarily need to label the sentence or phrase as simile, metaphor, hyperbole or whatever it is.

However, for reference, some of the more widely used labels for various types of figurative and special language are presented here for the teacher.

Alliteration — Starting a series of words or syllables with the same sound. Examples: The big bad boy bounced by me. Headline — Texas Takes Tennessee.

Allusion — Referring to a famous person or happening in real life or in literature. Examples: Is Bill headed for his Waterloo? Watch Old Templeton search the trash cans.

Analogy — Comparing in some detail two ideas or situations. Example: The tourists were herded like cattle into a barn, the tour conductor motioned them toward the door, and they ambled obediently into the shrine.

Assonance — Repeating vowel sounds in series of words. Example: A sad pack of gags.

Climax — Presenting in a sentence a series of actions in increasing magnitude. Example: Miss Mangrum quietly placed her books on the desk, picked up a broom, and then rushed toward the fighting boys, swinging as she came.

Dialect — Using language typical of a region or group, as Southern dialect or black dialect. Example: Po' white trash. Going ever' whichaway. I don't want you should . . .

Epigrams — Taking a sentence out of context for additional use because it is appropriate or expressive, usually witty. Example: She was deafened by the silence.

Euphemism — Substituting a milder or less direct expression for one that has an unpleasant connotation. Examples: Somewhat overweight for fat. Plain looking for ugly.

Hyperbole — Exaggerating greatly. Examples: He loped up the steps at 90 miles an hour. He ate a ton of hot dogs.

Idiom — Expressing idea in manner characteristic of a particular individual or a given historical period. Examples: Up Chicargoway. I'll do it on January 39.

Irony — Saying one thing but meaning just the opposite. Examples: Man, a headache is just what I need! I'm looking forward to his nonstop, two-hour lecture.

Metaphor — Saying one thing is another. Examples: He is an angel. She's a ball of fire.

Metonomy — Substituting a word for another that the substitute word suggests. Example: I see that your Dad gave you a set of wheels. (car)

Onomatopoeia — Using words that sound l[illegible] the action the word depicts. Examples: Toot of the horn. Buzzing bee. Pop of the cork.

Oxymoron — Using in combination words or actions that are contradictory or nonparallel. Examples: Sweet sorrow. Loud silence. The burly policeman daintily changed the baby's diaper.

Parallel construction — Using similar phrase or sentence construction for emphasis. Example: We came. We saw. We conquered.

Personification — Assigning human characteristics to animals, things or ideas. Examples: The wind whispered through the leaves. The dog scratched at the door and said, "Let me in."

Pun — Using a word with two meanings at the same time. Examples: He was swimming in sweat in the motor pool. That is not punny.

Simile — Saying one thing is like or as another. Examples: He is like an angel. She is as sweet as sugar.

Understatement — Expressing an idea more mildly than actually is the case. Examples: That elephant must weigh 100 pounds. It was a nasty crash; somebody must have been scratched a little.

Teachers must guard against overanalyzing a selection, looking for symbolic meaning. Picking a poem or story to pieces to find hidden meaning can lead to students' losing interest. They will react like the first grader in a group on a field trip to the zoo who said, "Don't let the teacher see you looking at that tiger, or we'll have to draw it when we get back to school." Some analysis is necessary; it should be controlled to avoid killing interest .

Subskills for this cluster are as follows.

- Recognizes imagery in stories and poems at listening level.
- Recognizes and interprets figurative language.
- Recognizes and understands idioms.
- Recognizes and interprets descriptive words and colorful language.
- Locates and interprets figurative language — colloquial language, similes.
- Recognizes imagery in written material.
- Recognizes and interprets emotional language.
- Recognizes and interprets sarcasm.
- Identifies and interprets various kinds of figurative language — alliteration, allusion, hyperbole, onomatopoeia, oxymoron, irony, metaphor, simile, metonomy, parallel construction, personification, understatement, pun.

Interpreting figurative and special language teaching example. Duplicate the following sentences for student use.

Downtown Athens rolls up the sidewalks at night.

Sally is no spring chicken.

Harvey is hardly out of the nest.

When Jack praised him, his confidence soared.

Job erosion set in.

Read the first sentence to students and then ask them to tell you what the sentence means. Lead them through discussion into seeing that the meaning is that almost no one comes to downtown Athens at night. Then compare the literal sentence (Almost no one comes to downtown Athens at night.) with the original sentence. Ask students whether they like the figurative or the literal sentence better, and why. Remind them that writers (and speakers) use figurative language to do a more effective job of expressing their ideas. If someone prefers the literal to the figurative version, tell them that sometimes the literal is more effective — and that the figurative sometimes is overdone.

Other teaching activities. Some activities and questions designed to assist in developing ability to interpret figurative and special language are given here. Some activities need to be duplicated for student use, some need to be written on the board, some merely need to be handled orally by the teacher, or some may be handled by a combination of these.

1. Complete these sentences by filling in the missing word.

   He's a hard nut to _____ .
   A rolling stone gathers no _____ .
   Her voice was sweet _____ to my ears.
   The biscuits were as hard as _____ .
   I'm as hungry as a _____ .

2. Read the first paragraph of "Cat Man" and write its meaning in your own words. (The selection uses much figurative language.)

3. What did the poet mean by the following phrases? Answer on the line provided.

   "As life passed us by at rocket speed" _____
   "Whining, clinging, loving burden" _____
   "With five thumbs on each hand" _____
   "Roared by me like I was backing up" _____
   "Puffy, cotton clouds floating in an ocean of sky" _____

4. On the lines provided, write these sentences in your own words.

The sweet little old lady suddenly soured and blasted forth at the burly police officers. _____
He was all ears, and she was all mouth. _____
He had a dill pickle personality. _____
The umpire called a foul and the batter's disposition became the same. _____
Miss Busby's busy bees buzzed into the room. _____
He has a lot to be modest about. _____

5. On the lines provided, write these sentences in more picturesque language.

The small boy was frightened as he went to see the large principal.

_____

Mrs. Davis drove quite rapidly down the road.

_____

The ladies made a lot of noise as they entered the room.

_____

Mr. Jones tried to keep from laughing, but it was difficult.

_____

The colonel fussed at the private.

_____

6. What are the meanings of the sentences below?

Watch it; don't get your dander up. _____
Right now I'm in the hole about five bucks. _____
He had us in stitches. _____
We're in the red as the fiscal year closes. _____
What he said got my goat. _____
After all, he is your own flesh and blood. _____
The teacher was fit to be tied. _____
I'm always wearing hand-me-downs. _____
Jack beat a hasty retreat when he saw the snake. _____
You made your bed, now lie in it. _____

Recognizing Literary Types and Devices

Still another cluster of skills involved in understanding and appreciating selections is that dealing with recognition of literary types and devices. For full appreciation of different kinds of literature, readers need some knowledge about the various types of written discourse. In prose they need to know the differences and similarities among folktales, fairy tales, legends, myths and fables. In poetry they need to know and appreciate some of the more frequently encountered types, as ballads, epics and haiku.

A caution seems appropriate at this point. The teacher must avoid overemphasizing instruction on identifying types of literature at the cost of emphasis killing students' interests in reading.

For the teacher's reference some of the more frequently encountered types of literature are defined here.

Autobiography - Person's life history written by herself or himself.

Ballad - Poem telling story in rhyme that is set to music.

Biography - Someone's life history.

Cartoon - Drawing often about something in public or political life, treated satirically.

Diary - Record of personal reactions or activities, kept over time.

Drama - Play; story written to be acted.

Editorial - Article in newspaper or magazine presenting opinions of editor or publisher.

Epic - Long narrative poem presented in exalted style, highly praising historical or legendary hero's accomplishments.

Essay - Literary selection giving personal viewpoint of writer, usually analyzing or interpreting some topic.

Fable - Story that teaches a lesson or concludes with a moral; often involves animals.

Fairy tale - Simple story dealing with supernatural characters, told to entertain children.

Fiction - Selection that presents imaginary events.

Folktale - Story with no known author that could have happened any time and in any place, that is passed on orally.

Haiku - Nonrhyming Japanese poem of three lines (of five, seven and five syllables), which refers to one of four seasons.

Historical fiction - Fictional selection with accurate historical setting.

Humorous fiction - Fictional selection involving considerable humor.

Informational article - Factual selection that presents information.

Legend - Story passed from generation to generation; considered to be historical, though impossible to verify.

Modern fantasy - Imaginative story in modern setting.

Myth - Story in which a practice, belief or natural occurrence is explained, as if it were historical.

Narrative poetry - Poem that tells a story.

Novel - Story told in prose, usually booklength.

Poetry - Selection in verse.

Realistic fiction - Fictional selection with realistic, life-like setting.

Science fiction - Fictional selection dealing with scientific impact — actual or imaginative — on people.

Short story - Short prose selection involving limited number of characters and sometimes, in lieu of plot, dealing with creation of feeling in the reader.

In addition to identifying types of literature, the readers need to recognize literary devices that writers employ. Those discussed here are writer's point of view, flashback and foreshadowing. The last section reviewed interpreting figurative and special language, which often is treated as a part of literary devices. For added emphasis, it was treated separately in this booklet.

Usually it is easy for readers to tell whether a story or informational article is written in the first or third person. The reader is cued by the personal pronouns **I, me, my, myself, mine, we, us, our, ourselves** and **ours** that the first person is being used. The absence of these pronouns tells the reader that third person has been used by the writer. When the writer speaks to the reader directly through use of pronouns like **you, your, yourself** and **yours**, second person has been used. Writers may within one selection use two or all three points of view. Students should be taught how to tell whether something has been written from a first person or third person point of view.

Writers often use foreshadowing to set the mood of a selection. "It was a bright and sunny morning . . ." and "The birds were singing happily as . . ." both forecast that something pleasant is about to occur. On the other hand, "A dark and dreary sky greeted them as . . ." and "She just didn't feel right about going as she . . ." both forecast something unpleasant. Occasionally, however, a writer of fiction — consciously or

unconsciously — may not use foreshadowing and the reader abruptly, without warning, moves from something good to something bad, or the reverse.

Flashback is used quite effectively by some writers. The transition from the present to the past may be triggered by the thoughts of one of the characters. "As Bart looked at the painting, his thoughts drifted back to his meeting last year with . . ." is a lead-in to describing that meeting, which is related to the story. Sometimes in booklength novels, such as those by William Styron, one chapter may be in the present and the next chapter a flashback to the past. Readers of course must be able to rearrange in their own minds the sequencing of events important to an understanding of the story.

Included in this cluster of skills is recognizing the writer's purpose. A writer writes to inform, to entertain or to persuade. The reader should learn to identify the author's intent.

Some of the skills involved in recognizing literary types and devices and in understanding and appreciating them are these.

- Recognizes plot in fiction.
- Recognizes drama form.
- Recognizes and understands fable.
- Recognizes and understands folktale.
- Distinguishes between fiction and nonfiction.
- Recognizes and understands biography.
- Recognizes and understands historical fiction.
- Identifies and interprets different kinds of literature — fairy tale, folktale, myth, fable, short story, science fiction, historical fiction, drama, biography, poetry, autobiography, essay, editorial.
- Recognizes author's intended purpose for writing selection — to inform, to entertain, to influence.
- Identifies writer's point of view.
- Interprets flashback.
- Interprets foreshadowing.

Recognizing literary types and devices teaching example.

Duplicate the following for student use. Tell students that each selection is one of the following — autobiography, biography, drama, fairy tale or myth. Have them identify each.

1. The selection has voice parts for several people and was written to be performed.
2. The President of the United States wrote a book about life in the White House.
3. Somebody wrote a factual book about Benjamin Franklin.

4. The story tells how the sun was born and how the Gods of Nature felt about it.

5. The story is about three elves who lived in an old oak tree.

Review the five types of literature with students. Then have someone read the first description of a selection. Make certain that students recognize this literary type. Refer to selections in basal readers that have been studied that are also examples of drama. Lead students to recognize that drama has parts for voices and that it is to be performed. Use a similar pattern with items 2 through 5.

Other teaching exercises. Some possible teaching exercises are given here.

1. Duplicate for student use. Ask students to identify the type of literature described in each.

   Karen and her parents took a spacemobile trip to the moon.

   Rabbit and Fox held a debate to determine which was smarter. While Fox was debating, Rabbit slipped into Fox's garden and ate all of his carrots. Moral: Don't talk too much lest you show your stupidity.

   The story tells how the sun gave the sunflower its golden color and its name.

   A Japanese poem, consisting of three nonrhyming lines, tells about spring.

   A poem of several stanzas tells a story.

2. Duplicate the five brief paragraphs for student use. Ask students to tell whether each is written from the first or third person point of view.

   Jack watched carefully as he stood near the door. The man in blue walked past without looking into the room. Suddenly he turned and greeted Jack with a grin.

   When the coach tells me to move, I move! One day he asked me why I was late in getting on the playing field. When he finished talking, I had already decided I would never be late again!

   It was a real bad day for me. My shoelace came untied near the end of the race. I tripped and fell. My first place slipped to fifth!

   The cows munched the grass near the gate. Though Billy was afraid, he thought he could slip through the gate to the car. Just as he tiptoed by Ole Betsy, she looked up and lowed softly. Billy fled back through the gate.

   Joe was talking. "I wonder why she can't tell us what the test will be about," he grumbled. "She won't even give me a little bitty hint."

3. Indicate the purpose the writer had for writing each of the following by placing the appropriate letter in the blank to the left of the paragraph. Use this key.

   A - to inform B - to entertain C - to persuade

   ____ As the hogs ran drunkenly toward Mamma and her visitors, all the ladies screamed and dashed — long dresses and all — toward the protective doors of the house. Emily's heart sank. She had left the barn gate open! And worse still, the apples she had fed the hogs had been rotten! Mamma would never forgive her for spoiling her party.

   ____ An automobile driver who drinks and drives is dangerous to himself or herself and to others. Each of us should resolve to keep our driving and drinking separated. If we drink, we shouldn't drive.

   ____ The University of Georgia, chartered in 1785, began its first class in 1801. It now has an enrollment of about twenty-five thousand, which is considerably more than that small handful of students who gathered more than 180 years ago for the first class.

4. Duplicate for student use. Ask students to tell in each whether foreshadowing is used, and if it is, whether it sets the tone for something pleasant or something unpleasant.

   It was a beautiful, clear night. The moon was hanging bright in the sky.

   Carla's feeling that morning was one of uneasiness. She knew something was wrong, but she couldn't tell what it was.

   John and Sam finished their game of tennis and came inside. Each placed his tennis racket in the closet.

   The deer looked uneasily toward the edge of the forest. Somewhere in there was the enemy that made loud noises and hurt animals.

   The frisky young colt whinnied as it saw Mary crossing the yard. When she reached the fence, the colt ran to the fence to be petted.

5. Duplicate for student use. Ask students to tell for each whether the flashback technique was used. If it was used, ask students to place the events in chronological order with the earliest event being listed first.

   As Teresa was eating breakfast, she thought about how embarrassed she was yesterday. To fall in a mud puddle was bad enough, but with everyone looking, it was worse!

Sam called time out, and the clock stopped with 30 seconds left. The referee blew the whistle to signal the end of the time-out. Play resumed.

Milford High won the game with a one-point margin. Sarah put in the winning goal with two seconds left on the clock. She had called a time out, and the coach had told her to settle down and to look for an opening.

6. Use questions similar to these to review students' ability to recognize literary types. Clarify types that may cause confusion.

   Is the story of Paul Bunyan a biography, folktale or myth? Why do you answer as you do?

   What type of literature is Lloyd Alexander's *The High King?* Why do you classify it as you do?

   What is the difference between a fable and a myth? What fables have we studied in this unit? What myths have we studied in this unit?

   Does Beverly Cleary's *Ramona Quimby, Age 8* fit better in the category of realistic fiction or humorous fiction? Or does it fit into both categories? Explain your answer.

   How can you tell the difference in an autobiography and a fictional story that is narrated in the first person?

7. When students read a selection in a basal reader, read a book or listen to a book being read to them (over time, chapter by chapter) by the teacher, ask students (when appropriate) to tell the following: (A) type of literature of selection or book; (B) writer's point of view; (C) writer's purpose; (D) whether foreshadowing was used and, if so, cite examples of it; (E) whether the flashback technique was used and, if so, cite examples of its use. Answering A, B and C should, be easy for selections in basals and in books. Answering D and E after a book has been read or heard read may be difficult unless the foreshadowing and/or flashback were used prominently. Don't pursue the matter on D and E if students don't recall instances in books read or heard read to them.

Interpreting Critically

Within the broad area of comprehension, critical reading is the most complex and important of the skills clusters. Yet, searches of the research literature reveal very few studies of real consequence in this area. Fortunately, however, theoretical discussions and teaching suggestions have been found to be of help to classroom teachers.

Reading and thinking critically should not be considered as skills of concern only at higher grade levels. Some six-year-old children bring considerable ability in thinking critically with them when they enter school. Good kindergarten and first grade teachers work toward helping their students to think critically. When the first grade teachers ask if dogs really can talk, they are helping children draw upon personal experiences to check the reality of something they have read. And this activity is aimed toward helping children interpret critically.

Reading critically involves making judgments. The reader may check the validity of what is read by comparing it with what is known from experience. He or she may decide whether a selection is relevant to a given topic, may compare information from two sources or may attempt to detect author bias in a selection. In these examples as well as in other subskills the reader makes some sort of evaluation or judgment.

At advanced levels newspapers and magazines can be used quite effectively in teaching critical reading. Signed columns and editorials reflect opinion and sometimes mix news facts with personal interpretation. Other parts of the newspapers also are useful.

Cartoons reflect biases of newspapers. They also involve some special skills of reading. Most cartoons demand several bits of information for appropriate interpretation, and the person who does not possess this information cannot "read" the cartoon. Intermediate and secondary students can become interested in keeping up with the news when teachers use cartoons regularly in instruction. They can easily be worked into social studies, English and reading classes.

Telling whether statements are fact or opinion involves critical reading. Readers use their knowledge of the world about them to make judgments about whether a statement is one of fact or one of opinion. The following two sentences will serve as examples.

London is located in England.

London is the most interesting city of the world.

In the first sentence a statement that can be verified is given. It is possible for a reader to find factual sources to prove that London is in England, or he or she could go to England to determine if London **is** or **is not** in England. In the second sentence a statement that is impossible to prove or disprove is given; therefore, it is an opinion. If the sentence stated that some group said that London was the most beautiful city in the world, it would be possible to verify that the group **said** that London was the world's most beautiful city. However, as stated, the second sentence is an opinion.

Recognizing bias is another subskill of critical reading. Readers understand that writers select words to convey a negative or a positive image. Some examples are these — the scheming coach vs. the thoughtful coach; a slushy day vs. a rainy day; the friendly mayor vs. the mayor. Newspaper articles and news magazine articles are good sources for exercises in detecting bias, since they contain editorials. Children's books also contain many examples of words selected to influence the reader. The connotations of words are important for an accurate interpretation of the writer's message.

Closely related to recognizing bias is identifying and interpreting propaganda techniques. The reader (and listener) is constantly bombarded with messages containing propaganda. Various classifications of propaganda techniques are offered, but the following are the most frequently encountered techniques.

Name calling (Giving something a bad label, as "Washington bureaucrats.")

Glittering generality (Giving something a good name, as saying that some product is the best with no supporting data.)

Transfer (Associating something with something else to give it favorable status, as "Janez's Camp is a favorite of all Bulldog fans.")

Testimonial (Having something endorsed by a respected person, as "Robert Redford eats Bigley's peanuts.")

Plainfolks (Giving impression something is for ordinary, "good, solid" people.)

Card stacking (Giving false evidence or faulty logic, as "I failed because he didn't motivate me enough.")

Band wagon (Giving the impression that "everybody does it.")

Advertisements in newspapers and in magazines are excellent sources for examples of propaganda techniques.

Subskills in the critical reading skills clusters are these.

- Distinguishes truth and untruth in pictures and orally presented stories.
- Recognizes difference between relevant and irrelevant information.
- Distinguishes fact from fantasy in pictures and stories.
- Makes judgments about actions in a selection.
- Detects overtones of meanings in words.
- Evaluates relevant information.
- Recognizes techniques writers use to get their points across (propaganda techniques).
- Evaluates different points of view from different sources.

- Detects difference between fact and opinion.
- Uses copyright date to check on validity of material.
- Uses background of author to check on validity of material.
- Detects author bias in selection.
- Differentiates between rumors and opinions.
- Predicts cause-effect relationships and evaluates prediction on basis of evidence.
- Recognizes story problem and evaluating possible solutions.

Fact versus opinion: Teaching example 1. Write the following on the board or otherwise duplicate for student use.

1. Atlanta is the capital of Georgia.
2. Georgia is the most beautiful state in the United States.
3. The University of Georgia is located in Athens.
4. Georgia has a population of more than four million.
5. Everybody enjoys visiting the mountains in Georgia.

Ask students to tell whether each sentence is a statement of fact or a statement of opinion. Remind them that a fact tells something that is true or can be verified and that an opinion is what somebody thinks about something. The opinion often concerns a person's value judgment about an action, place or object. After statement 1 is read aloud, ask whether Atlanta really is the capital of Georgia. Then discuss how you could prove that it is (refer to map, encyclopedia, visit the state capitol building in Atlanta and so on). Ask next on item 2 whether or not Georgia **is** the most beautiful state in the United States or if the writer just thinks it is. Lead students to conclude that it would be impossible to prove the statement, that it would involve making value judgments about the beauty of Georgia, that what one person may think is beautiful might not be thought to be so by others. Complete the remaining sentences in a similar manner.

Propaganda techniques: Teaching example 2. Place the following on the board or otherwise duplicate for student use. What is the writer trying to do in each statement?

1. Everybody drinks Parppypoo. Why don't you join them?
2. Robert Redford drives a Timkoyta.
3. Congressman Peters is a good ole boy.
4. President Hopalong Reagan is on television again.
5. National Bank is as solid as the Rock of Gibraltar.
6. The shifty-eyed mayor stepped forward.
7. Come to Rifty's for a good Georgia Bulldog experience.

Explain to students that sometimes writers and speakers use words to try to influence others to believe a certain way, the way they want readers or speakers to believe, that they try to sway their audiences. Read the question and then read item 1. It should be made clear to

students that the writer wants the reader to buy Parppypoo. Continue with the other statements in a similar manner. Two items attempt to make the President (item 4) and the mayor (item 6) appear in a bad light. Be sure that students understand this. (The particular propaganda techniques being used need not be identified.)

Other teaching activities. Some activities and sample questions designed to assist teachers in developing critical reading are given here. Some activities need to be duplicated for student use, some may be written on the board, some may be presented orally by the teacher or some combination of these may be best.

1. Use questions similar to these to lead students into reading critically.

   Was Jim wise or unwise in staying with the plane? Why?

   Is the historical background of this story accurately portrayed? What are your clues?

   Was the Gettysburg Address worthy of being included in the greatest of American writings? Why do you answer as you do?

   Was Franklin Roosevelt a great president? Justify your answer.

   Do you think it was cruel for Charlotte to kill bugs? Why? Why did Wilbur get his feelings hurt when the sheep scolded him for being noisy? What did this tell you about Wilbur? Why do you suppose the goose wasn't Wilbur's friend? Do you think Wilbur would have wanted Templeton as a close friend? Why or why not?

   Is this article fact or opinion? How do you know? Is the historical background of this story accurately portrayed? What clues help you decide if the author of this book knew enough about the subject to write about it? Could this story really have happened? How do you know?

   Compare these two geography books. One was published in 1982, the other in 1953. What difference did you find? In view of the copyright date of the older book, is it likely to have accurate information on the topic? Why?

2. Duplicate for student use. Ask students to note the differences in meanings and to check to the left of those words with negative connotations.

____ conservation	She was **conservative** in her use of coal that winter.
____ stingy	Mrs. Bittsy was **stingy** with the coal, and we almost froze.

_____ saving	She was **saving**, and we didn't waste any coal that winter.
_____ frugal	She was a **frugal** person, and she cautioned us to burn no more coal that we actually needed.
_____ Scrooge	She was the **Scrooge** type, and she gave us a minimum amount of coal to burn.
_____ skinflint	The old **skinflint** kept all the coal for herself.
_____ greedy	The **greedy** old lady kept all the coal for her own use.
_____ economical	Mrs. Bittsy was an **economical** person, and she saved as much coal as possible.

3. Note the difference in meanings.

afraid	He was **afraid** of the snake.
frightened	The snake **frightened** him.
panicked	He **panicked** when he saw the snake.
traumatized	He was **traumatized** by the snake.
respected	He **respected** the snake's ability to protect itself, and he kept his distance.
cautious	He was **cautious** as he approached the snake.

4. In each selection below underline sentences that express opinions.

   The plant measured three feet and four inches in height. The flowers were the most beautiful Sandra had ever seen. Their fragrance surpassed that of any other flowers in the show. Mrs. Brown commented that she would trim the plant when she got it home.

   Henry stretched out to reach the wall. He felt like a million — and 10 feet tall. This was the best day of his life. He had just won first place in the broad jump.

5. In the selection below underline the articles mentioned that are inappropriate for the time period.

   It was 1863, and the war was well under way — and had been for some time. General Lee, being driven by a private, rode up to Headquarters in his jeep. The official photographer, using a polaroid camera, snapped his picture as he walked toward the building. Just as he entered the building, a messenger rode up on a motorcycle.

6. Reading to evaluate critically
   Directions: Read each advertisement below and then rewrite it, leaving out opinions.

Buy a lot today in Athen's most prestigious neighborhood — Bantym Wood — at today's lowest prices.

Fragrance unmatched by perfumes costing $50 an ounce. Mi-lady will cause men to notice you. Insist on the best.

Drive a Chevalac today. Dependable. Most beautiful car on the market.

7. Label each statement below as **Fact** or **Opinion.**

_____ Playing football on a cold day is terrible.
_____ Rainfall is very light or nonexistent in deserts.
_____ Aaron Burr killed a man in a duel.
_____ Jimmy Carter was an excellent president.
_____ Red roses are the most beautiful of all flowers.
_____ Atlanta is located in Georgia.
_____ John Adams was the second President of the United States.
_____ Lemonade is more refreshing than orange juice.
_____ Minnesota contains more than 10,000 lakes.
_____ *Charlotte's Web* is the best book ever written.

8. In the paragraph below underline the words and phrases that convey negative meanings about the congressman and his actions.

Congressman Blainer, whose shifty eyes betrayed him as he testified, contended that he was out of the country when the incident occurred. Despite the mounting evidence, he attempted to push the blame onto his assistant. The porcine representative never would admit that he drank too heavily from the public trough. When the hearing was over, he stalked out of the building, got into his expensive automobile and angrily drove to his country estate.

9. Propaganda techniques are often encountered in various types of writing, and especially in advertisements. For each statement below identify the particular propaganda technique used. The techniques and their descriptions are these.

A. Name calling (giving an idea or thing a bad label)
B. Glittering generality (giving an idea or thing a good name)
C. Transfer (invoking the authority or sanction of a desirable position)
D. Testimonial (appealing to a respected individual)
E. Plain folks (being a part of "the people")
F. Card stacking (false evidence or logic)
G. Band wagon (everybody does it)

_____ He's a good ole boy.
_____ Join the crowds at Richesons.
_____ NuDay pleases all!
_____ Tricky Dick can't sell his book.
_____ Ran Amuck, the television star, smokes Tarfulls.
_____ "I know you don't love me because you won't let me go."
_____ Come as you are; we're just a country restaurant.
_____ Attend Camp Darwin — a good, Christian experience.
_____ Young people prefer Cokesipep.
_____ It's as sound as the Rock of Gibraltar!

Chapter 3

Rating Scale for Teacher Responsibilities In Comprehension Instruction

As a summary, a rating scale for teacher responsibilities in comprehension instruction is presented. It may be used by individual teachers or by school or school system groups to obtain leads for staff development.

Selected responsibilities of the reading teacher in comprehension are listed below. Indicate by circling the appropriate number of the extent to which a given teacher reflects each characteristic or meets each responsibility. Use the following ratings.

1 - Almost always	3 - Sometimes	5 - Undecided
2 - Most of the time	4 - Seldom or never	6 - Not applicable

1. Emphasizes comprehension as **the** major goal of reading instruction. 1 2 3 4 5 6
2. Develops a well-planned and systematic program of comprehension instruction. 1 2 3 4 5 6
3. Adapts reading comprehension instruction to the individual levels, abilities and needs of all students. 1 2 3 4 5 6
4. Makes use of students' knowledge of their language in comprehension instruction. 1 2 3 4 5 6
5. Builds on students' backgrounds of experience in comprehension instruction. 1 2 3 4 5 6
6. Teaches word recognition skills thoroughly as means to the ends of comprehension and appreciation. 1 2 3 4 5 6
7. Sets the instructional stage for the development of all important comprehension skills. 1 2 3 4 5 6
8. Gives adequate attention in reading instruction to word meanings and "thinking" skills since they are heavy contributors to reading comprehension. 1 2 3 4 5 6
9. Teaches comprehension in settings that encourage students to read for enjoyment and satisfaction. 1 2 3 4 5 6

10. Encourages the use of and further development of comprehension skills in all subject areas.	1 2 3 4 5 6
11. Knows the comprehension skills and how to teach these skills.	1 2 3 4 5 6
12. Uses commercial or teacher-made instructional materials reflecting the view that reading comprehension consists of a number of overlapping, related clusters of subskills.	1 2 3 4 5 6
13. Uses a variety of techniques (formal and informal) to assess the effectiveness of reading comprehension instruction.	1 2 3 4 5 6
14. Avoids pressures to emphasize only those aspects of comprehension that can be measured easily.	1 2 3 4 5 6
15. Encourages parent involvement in helping their children to improve reading comprehension.	1 2 3 4 5 6

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